

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

C. Amendments to the Claims.

1. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

5 forming a first layer comprising deposited silicon nitride over a first and second side of a substrate;

maintaining the second side of the substrate essentially free of any other overlying layers;

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the substrate; and

10 forming device features on the first side of the substrate.

2. (Cancelled) The method of claim 1, wherein:

forming the first layer comprises depositing a layer of silicon nitride.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein:

15 removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the substrate includes wet chemically etching with phosphoric acid.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein:

the layer of silicon nitride has a thickness of less than 3,000 Å.

20 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the substrate includes isotropically etching.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

25 forming device features includes polishing a dielectric layer.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein:

polishing the dielectric layer includes chemical-mechanical polishing a shallow trench dielectric layer.

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including:

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the first side of the substrate.

5 9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein:

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the first side of the substrate includes forming a shallow trench isolation etch mask.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including:

forming a second layer over the first side of the substrate; and

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the substrate includes etching with a high degree of selectivity between the first layer and the second layer.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein:

the second layer comprises silicon dioxide; and

15 the first layer comprises silicon nitride.

12. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

forming a first layer that includes a first part formed over a first substrate side and a second part formed over a second substrate side;

20 forming a second layer over the first part while maintaining the second substrate side essentially free of any other additional layers;

removing at least a portion of the second part; and

after removing at least the portion of the second part, forming features on the first substrate side.

25 13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further including:

patterning the first part before forming the second layer.

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein:

removing at least a portion of the second part includes etching essentially all of the second part.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, further including:

5 the second layer serves as an etch mask to prevent etching of the first part.

16. (Currently Amended) A shallow trench isolation (STI) method, comprising the steps of:

10 forming a trench etch mask layer over a first and second substrate side,  
the trench etch mask layer including a layer of silicon nitride deposited  
over the first and second substrate sides;

maintaining the second substrate side essentially free of any  
additional overlying layers; and

removing at least a portion of the trench etch mask layer that is formed over the second substrate side.

15 17. (Cancelled) The STI method of claim 16, wherein:

forming a trench etch mask includes depositing a layer silicon nitride over the first and second substrate sides.

18. (Original) The STI method of claim 16, further including:

20 patterning the trench etch mask layer formed over the first substrate side and forming a trench dielectric over the first substrate side.

19. (Currently Amended) The STI method of claim 18, further including:

etching a substrate to form trenches having a depth of less than 4,000  
angstroms with the patterned trench etch mask layer as an etch mask.

20. (Original) The STI method of claim 18, further including:

25 chemical-mechanical polishing the trench dielectric.